THE MODEL VILLAGE

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MODEL VILLAGE

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CONTENTS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

TALKS WITH EEYYA. (With Introduction by Sadhu T. L. Vaswani).

". . . 'Love is service' we long ago were taught, and the echo of this Teaching is heard from time to time through the din and darkness of our daily pilgrimage. 'Eeyya' repeats the call, sometimes in soft and silvery tones, and again in the tone of a warning Clarion."—*The Occult Review* (London).

THE VISION OF LIFE. (With a foreword by Sadhu T. L. Vaswani).

". . . This small volume is also written in the author's delightfully easy style. He carries one upward on the wings of his thought to high and inspiring summits where wide perception is possible."—*New India.*

DIALOGUES IN AN ASHRAM.—" In this book the author deals with Religion as correlated with the human activities in a way strangely reminiscent of Shaw . . . the doctrine of the Superman forms one of the most suggestive chapters in the book."—*The Swarajya* (Madras).

SPIRITUAL LIFE.—Essays on Religion and its relation to Modern Life.

TO

DR. A. SAID AND G. N. MALLIK

TWO MODEL MEN OF SIND

INTRODUCTION

THIS is a plan of a fourfold experiment,—economic, social, religious and, to some extent, political—the object of which is to establish a more equitable order leading to a true and lasting form of unity. Our immediate undertaking is to create a model village with a model community whose day-to-day life is governed by the Laws of Nature. When we speak of a more equitable order we do not think of the Capital-Labour problem of our times only, which represents the economic side, but of an altogether new outlook on life. For the four sides of our life are interlinked and interdependent.

Discord and division have crept into all departments of our life. In the economic sphere we notice a complete absence of laws that might regulate the lives of various economic units with the result that

strong competition, surpassing in hardness the struggle for existence between any two species of animals, prevails everywhere and mars the growth of industries to ideal conditions, forcing them to cater for the satisfaction of the so-called needs of the majority without taking into consideration the real needs of mankind. Yet this is only one instance of our economic disorder. Another and perhaps a greater evil effect of the absence of order in this sphere is the creation of a spirit of animosity between various classes.

In the sphere of social life we notice a similar discord. It is not what may be called a clean life. It is based on no rational principles. The principle underlying our various social customs and institutions is not the growth of the society and of the individual as they stand to-day; it is either some vague religious doctrine which has no application to our life, or some economic urge which does not take into consideration other more important

factors. Our dowry system is an example to the point. Our marriages are far from eugenic. Neither physical, nor moral and spiritual considerations are the *motif*. Often money, class and caste considerations condition marriage.

Our customs have been handed down to us from the storehouse of the past and command our absolute allegiance without even a pretension to satisfy the changed conditions of our times. They have been selected haphazard and accepted unaltered. They were evolved when mankind was still divided into clans, geographically separated one from another. Today, as a result of modern means of communication, mankind has been physically united and a step has been taken towards greater moral and mental *rapprochement* in the future. These customs, therefore, may be regarded as so many anachronisms. And there is not one custom common to all mankind. This is another proof of the absence of any principle in our social life.

In the sphere of politics we discern even a greater discord the proof of which is furnished by the increasing number of wars. In fact we have no pure politics today. Our politics are based not on any principle of racial or national growth but on pure opportunism. They are a medley of laws which seek to satisfy sometimes economic, sometimes social and sometimes religious ends. The League of Nations has tried to introduce some order in the relations between various national and political units but it has failed to prevent wars as it lacks the power to make its laws effective. Besides, being dominated by the white races, it does not inspire confidence among the nations of the East.

Lastly, we come to religion which still is an important factor in our life. Here, too, we find a terrible discord. Not that there is any fundamental difference in the teachings of our prophets, but these form only an insignificant part of the religious institutions which divide humanity into

parties and factions inimical to one another.

One may justify the existence of a few schools of thought in every department of life on the philosophical principle of duality or the psychological principle of variety of temperaments. But there must be a limit to such variety and division. Division beyond a point becomes disintegration. The various factions in our society, arrayed one against another, are a picture and proof of the setting in of a process of disintegration. The variety of Creation is no doubt an evidence of the Creator's abundance of energy. But ours is a sort of variety which speaks of fatigue and not of surplus strength. It should, therefore, be regarded as a disease.

Indeed, there can be no absolute uniformity of action or complete unity of design in life. We cannot always expect all people to act as one nation, or all communities and classes to act as one community. Such a unity would be suicidal. It

would be against Nature, against Life. Nature delights in diversity and through it Life enriches itself. Mind is an important factor in man's life. The essence of its activity is freedom. Therefore we cannot evolve any bee-hive pattern of unity. Ours can only be a growing, organic unity, just as the unity of five fingers in the hand. Each has its distinct function, yet, when necessary, they can all join and work as one hand.

To escape this disorder, to attain that organic unity, is the ultimate purpose of our experiment. Our Model Village is the first rung of the ladder which leads to the storey which at present we can see only hazily at the top with its four sides of Economic Order, Social Harmony, Political Equilibrium and Religious Liberty. The principles underlying our organization, as we said, are similar to those of Nature. The various democratic, socialistic and autocratic constitutions are merely results of our reactions. The history of evolution does

not bear out any of these exclusively, not even democracy. Nature no doubt has placed her resources at the disposal of all equally but of these each one avails himself differently. With equality is joined the necessary condition of quality. Life grows on all sides. Nature gives equal opportunities to all living forms. She places at their disposal equally the light and the energy of the sun and the resources of the earth. In that sense she is, indeed, democratic or socialistic; but only in that sense. Having done that, she leaves the various forms free to avail themselves of these resources as best as they can. In the Model Village we seek to do no more. *We synthetize equality with quality.* This is so far as our economics go.

Our sociology and politics also are based on Nature. In these, freedom and discipline are the parallels of equality and quality—the underlying principles of our economics. Nature has made every living form essentially free. But because everyone is free,

everyone has to be disciplined. There are limits put upon each one of us in order that we may not destroy others' freedom. Thus only can man and mouse live together in one house, though each has its distinct sphere and distinct purpose in life.

In the Model Village we have carried out a thorough overhauling of institutions. We had to be indifferent to the merits of individual parts. In the building up of its organization we borrowed no ideas; we followed no patterns. We started on a clean slate. This is what a mechanic does when a machine shows signs of disorder. Instead of wasting time over finding out local defects he starts overhauling. It would be a false economy to postpone it and try a new screw here, a new valve there. Hence the need of going back to original, natural principles for the reconstruction of our society. It may be that after overhauling some of the old parts still remain. And some patterns we have made may not be altogether new. But we have

not been satisfied with merely changing parts. We have tried to supply a new kind of energy to the machine—a new conception of religion with a new code of morals.

A new conception of religion is always necessary for the birth of a new order. No outer modifications in the forms of life can bring about a real change. Man's spirit is the true repository of changes that denote progress. Side by side with the change in the economic, social and political institutions, therefore, there must be a change in our conception regarding the meaning and purpose of life, *i.e.*, religion. Indeed, what is civilization but, essentially, a product of a new conception of life? What is culture, what are all these achievements of science and art but mere offspring of man's new attitude to life? They have been so in the past. In the future things may be different in this way that religion may be divested of its institutionalism, but still the greatest minds of humanity will be the religious minds and

our greatest achievements will always be inspired by religion, personal though it be. Indeed, all inspiration is religious in essence. And nothing short of inspiration can bring about the change of order we desire. To those who would point out Russia's example and say Russia could introduce a new social order without the aid of religion, we would say: Russia's effort was deeply religious. Lenin possessed all the qualities of a religious man—the spirit of sacrifice, the love of truth, and service of the poor.

Another reason why we think a change in our conception of religion necessary is that our religious institutions have become a cause of division among us today. Religion instead of being a free search for truth has become a shop of dogmas where truth is bottled and sold with tickets. It is forgotten that bottled truth becomes poison and he who drinks it becomes spiritually dead. A new conception of religion as a *personal* method of attaining truth or as a

principle of service is, therefore, essential to the solution of our many-tangled problems. How far can we solve these problems? Let us see.

TAIB,
18th May, 1935 A. H. JAISINGHANI.

THE PLAN IN OUTLINE

OUR Model Village has 800 acres of cultivable land, with a separate water-course, besides the area occupied by huts, etc. This is divided into fifty shares of 16 acres each. There are 60 huts in the centre of the property, each consisting of a number of rooms besides a kitchen and a bath-room. Each hut stands 200 feet apart from the other and has a little vegetable garden, a cattle shed, a small poultry yard and a kennel attached to it. The inside of the huts is well ventilated, allowing free passage to air from one end to the other. Though the huts are not of the same shape and design still, in general appearance, they all suggest simplicity and durability of structure.

Our village is planned according to modern principles of village-planning. Its

roads are straight and wide, connected by streets running crosswise. The streets look like smaller roads. There are no dingy paths winding through the village. Round the village goes a circular road, lined with trees at regular intervals. It is egg-shaped. At the egg-point it meets another road which joins it to the trunk-road, connecting our village with the outside world.

Our roads, unlike other village roads in India, have lighting arrangements. As yet we cannot afford electricity. But we see gas lamps at regular intervals throughout the village. As yet our roads are not paved also, but we see enough weeds and other grass spread over them so that there is no dust flying when a village cart passes by. This grass, incidentally, prevents the roads from becoming muddy when it rains. The water passes over the grass without affecting the road.

Our Model Village cannot also afford an up-to-date underground drainage system such as we have in our cities. But we

can still less afford to have water standing in the streets and creating disease besides a lot of inconvenience. Our roads, therefore, are planned in such a way that the rain-water slopes down into the fields which are on a lower level than the area occupied by the village buildings. For daily use, during normal weather, we have our small open drains, running from house to house, along the roads. Where the roads pass near the fields, we have dug channels running parallel to the roads and separating them from the fields. These channels save the roads from being flooded when the fields are soaked. Incidentally, they (the channels) also absorb rain-water and drain it to the lower area in the fields. This is how in a simple way we have tried to solve our drainage problem. Not that we are satisfied with this sort of arrangement, but this is how we have started. In the course of time, as our resources increase, we expect to have a suitable, underground drainage system. In the meantime we have to be

content with makeshift arrangements in order to save time and energy for other more important things.

For our water supply we depend upon our public wells on all the four sides of our village. Not only we have no money to spend on a house-to-house pipe system but, we believe, where water can be had so near, it is best to have a fresh supply rather than get it through underground pipes where it often gets contaminated. To save time to the householder, however, we have engaged a water-carrier who carries water in a small cart and delivers it at fixed times to all the houses, morning and evening. The wells are fenced in order to keep the supply of water pure. They have each a raised platform where one can stand and draw water. They have walls about ten feet high so that the dust of the roads may not pollute the supply. The top is open for the purpose of ventilation.

In the middle of the village, surrounded by the huts, stand our public buildings,

whose names we shall come to know later, and a large public park. The style of these buildings is different. They are large, artistic structures. An outsider would think they were some *Zamindari* mansions. For in other villages in our country the public buildings like the Punchayet Hall, the School, if any, and the Temple are usually old houses in a dilapidated condition, while the *Zamindari* mansions give the appearance of comfortable, artistic buildings. In our village it is not so. Our villagers satisfy their sense of art or their vanity in the public buildings. The private houses are all simply designed. We may say, however, that the reason for this simplicity is not any ascetic determination on the part of our villagers but economic necessity. When we are able to save time and energy, there is no reason why we should not bring in our dwellings art and a reasonable amount of comfort. With the growth of our resources during the course of time all that may become possible. In the mean-

time we try to make our public buildings the sanctuaries of art and a mirror of our aspirations.

Let us now peep inside the houses and get an idea of their inner economy. Some houses have two and some three living-rooms one of which is a dining-room, combining the function of a sitting-room, and one a bed-room. The third is either a bed-room, a study or a drawing-room according to the need of the tenants. The verandah runs in front of these rooms. The houses with three living-rooms are meant for large families. On the back of the dining-room is a small store-room which is usually approachable from the kitchen and the dining-room. At the back of the bed-room is the bath-room which opens on the front of the kitchen-garden. On the other side of the bath-room is the privy or the water-closet about which we must say something more here.

In our village we have public water-closets as well as private ones. We shall

describe both of these. The public closets are kept in the fields at a short distance from the village. They are cabinets about 4 by 5 feet and about 7 feet in height with the top covered and sides near the top either fully open or ventilated through a wire-netting. Each cabin provides a commode which lets the excreta fall in a pit about six feet deep. On the sides of the pit is kept dry earth which is used to cover the excreta. The floor of the cabin stands two feet higher than the ground level. A number of such cabins stand on all sides of the village. These are daily used by men and women till after sometime the pits get filled up. Then the cabins are either shifted or closed for sometime to allow the excreta to turn into manure when it is removed and used in the fields for agricultural purposes. For our children, old men and sick members of the family we have our private closets which are of two kinds Those with pits are like the public closets, described above, with this difference

that the pit in case of the private closets is deeper and narrower owing to lack of space. Its depth also ensures its freedom from bad smell. On the floor of the cabin there is a dust-container from which clean dust is thrown on the excreta. From time to time the excreta, turned into manure, is removed and used in the fields. A more convenient system employed by many householders nowadays is that of a big round tub kept under the commode-cabin which stands three or four feet higher. This tub is used the whole day as a receptacle for excreta which is each time covered with earth. It is removed at night and emptied in the pits near the public closets. The tub or the receptacle has convenient handles and a well-fitted lid so that it can be easily removed and cleaned.

In a similar way we make good use of our bath-room water. It is collected in a tank near the kitchen-garden where some disinfectants are mixed with it, specially in case it is used for salads and other

vegetables eaten raw. Thence it is drawn into the vegetable garden.

Our kitchen arrangements also deserve a mention here. To begin with, we may state that we do not believe in keeping articles of use on the ground. They occupy so much space and allow dust to collect. All things, therefore, find their place on the shelves and pegs in the walls symmetrically arranged or in the cabinets embedded in the walls. On the ground will be found only a stool and a coal or kerosine tin. Here, in passing, we may state that those who use the kitchen only occasionally for tea or other small preparations, use kerosine lamps. (We shall read in a later chapter about our co-operative kitchen). But those who make use of their kitchen oftener, find coal cheaper. The stoves are scientifically designed so as not to let heat escape unutilized. There is always a big basin full of water kept by the side where the surplus heat is used for heating water which is used for washing purposes.

In a similar way we maintain the cow-shed, the kennel and the poultry-yard with an eye always on possible economies of space, time, energy and materials.

As regards furniture, the houses are provided with the most elementary kind,—some cots, tables, chairs and drawers, etc. The rest we leave to the taste of individuals occupying them.

Now fifty out of these sixty huts are meant for the fifty holders of land and ten for outside, professional men that we engage temporarily or permanently of whom we shall know later on. These fifty huts and fifty holdings of 16 acres each are distributed among fifty men who fulfil certain tests and conditions.

THE AVERAGE MAN AND WOMAN

THE nature of an organization depends ultimately upon its individual units. Therefore a Model Village would be an impossibility without model individuals. There are, for this reason, a number of conditions which every member must satisfy. Our average man and woman are expected to maintain a higher level of efficiency than do the average man and woman in an ordinary village of our size. This is the secret of our success.

The man and woman in our village are strong, healthy beings. Sound health is considered a necessary qualification for almost everything. We try to maintain the community's health by various rules and regulations. The health of the Model-villager is not his individual concern only.

It is equally the concern of the community. The life of our little community is so organized that unless everyone does some amount of manual work he cannot become a useful member of the community. We believe some amount of physical exercise is necessary for the health and welfare of every human being and instead of introducing costly games such as tennis, hockey, etc., we have given our villagers the most natural and fruitful method of exercise in the form of manual labour. There is a belief that artistic minds hate manual labour and that art grows in leisure, as if artistic minds could escape the natural laws of the body! Leisure may be conducive to the growth of art but leisure does not mean total absence of work. We believe, manual labour has a purifying effect upon the mind. Instead of being inimical to the growth of art manual labour leads to its enrichment through that refinement of feeling and thought which is born of harmony. Every one in our community,

therefore, does some kind of physical work. The farmer (which means every landholder) works in the field. Some members of the family work with him, others go to the factory or work on the roads; at the wells or in the public institutions of our village. The school teacher and the student work in the school garden which they have to maintain. The clerk in office is usually a part-time worker on the farm where other members of his family work the whole day. As health and physical vigour are valued in our community and considered to be the first qualification for employment, everybody must 'keep himself in condition.' In our hive we keep no drones. If occasionally any arise they are soon expelled by sheer want of support.

Such an arrangement has saved us from many problems more serious than disease. As everybody has to labour in order to live, no one is superior to another. Therefore, we have no class feeling—at least not in the same degree as you find in a

capitalistic society where some have to labour more than they should and others less or not at all. Indeed, the chances are few for capitalism to arise in our community. While allowing some scope for man's inborn greed, which supplies him with a motive, we do not desire that scope to be so widened that we may contract the very evils from which, in this village, we have tried to escape.

Then, emotionally, the average man and woman in our community are well harmonized beings. The chief factors controlling a person's emotions are: (1) those that lie within him or *the personal*, and (2) those that are imposed on him from outside or *the non-personal.* The former are an outcome of physical and mental heredity and the latter of the prevailing social opinion and social heredity which includes culture and religion. So far as the first are concerned, man's health and history are the guides. And these are taken into consideration at the time of enrolling new

members. As regards the other two (social opinion of the day and social heredity), we have made altogether a new start, ours being a non-religious and culturally unbiased organization. •We have as such no social heredity while the social opinion of the day is determined by the broad principles and ideals that inspire our community. It exercises no unhealthy influence upon the individual's emotions.

Such being their emotional outfit, the mental health of our man and woman is assured. For emotions control mental life no less than they are controlled by it. And the result of this physical-emotional-*cum*-mental harmony is a spiritual unity which transcends our differences of blood, culture and religion.

And, yet, our average man and woman are no angels. It is difficult to overcome the force of habits of life and thought. Though a little more efficient and a little more self-harmonized, the average man and woman in our village still have similar

problems and difficulties as beset the path of their brethren. To be sure, they fall ill occasionally and need the help of medical science. They also quarrel, being overpowered by emotions or misguided by desire. And so they need a Dispensary, a Court of Law and several other institutions to police, to discipline, to train, to nourish, to protect them; in short, to maintain the equilibrium of their life. We, therefore, like every other society, or for that matter, like every other unit of life, need a centre of government to fulfil these various tasks. What is that centre of government in our village?

THE COMMUNITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

THE interests of the community and of the individual in human society, under ideal conditions, are always identical. But, sometimes, when either the community forgets the meaning and purpose of its existence, which is the growth of the individual, or when the individual, oblivious of the limits imposed on him by Nature, opposes the will of the community, friction between the two arises. Every civilized community, therefore, makes certain rules which operate between itself and the individual and has a special body of men in charge of those rules governing its life.

The body in charge of the various institutions and organizations in our village is called the Punchayet. It is at once the head, the hands and the heart of our

organization. It thinks, it legislates and it executes its own decrees. It is our Parliament, our Court and our Municipality. It does everything for us and we make it what it is. We shall now describe some of its powers and functions.

The General Body of the Punchayet consists of the registered members of our community. And, though, in our village there is no church or temple or any other place for sectarian worship and, though, we have done away with Religion as an institution, still our organizers thought it necessary that, as far as possible, our Punchayet should consist of members from all the communities in our province. Peoples' minds take long to disabuse themselves of prejudices. Provision, therefore, had to be made against the possibility of our village Punchayet being divided into parties. The leasing of the lands accordingly was restricted to a fixed number of members from each community.

Either husband or wife or any of the

major children of the family represents each holding. The person once selected by the family, however, cannot be replaced by another till the end of the year.

The Punchayet delegates its powers to several committees for performing different duties. It regulates the economic, social and moral affairs of the village by its decisions or through the decisions of its special committees. All matters relating to administration are decided by the General Body. Special committees are in charge of sanitation, education, lighting, arbitration, etc.

The meetings of the General Body of our Punchayet or of its special committees are presided over by one of the members selected on the spot. There is no permanent *Mukhi*, Chairman or President. Thus we have removed an important cause of formation of cliques and parties. By this way the usual wrangle over presidential elections is avoided and our corporation works smoothly, unobstructed by the ambi-

tions of greedy and unscrupulous men. This innovation has saved us from a great deal of botheration. We, however, have a permanent, paid Secretary who is appointed by the General Body. He does the routine work of issuing notices, recording minutes, etc.

No decision of the General Body of our Punchayet or of its special committees is valid unless there is a quorum of one-third of its total members. In case any committee consists of less than nine members, the quorum is three. This is an improvement upon the prevailing custom among other Punchayets which cannot make a decision unless all the members are present. In the old, village-Punchayet system this rule probably did not involve any difficulties as the members—one from each family—could be easily called together, specially when any member that the family sent could represent its interests. In the busy, active life of our village, with its vital links with the outside world, however, it is not always possible to get all members

together; hence the need of a fixed quorum.

Our Punchayet has the power to select members for election to higher administrative bodies. Every Model-villager must bow to the Punchayet's decision in this matter. And with our united support our candidates get elected without much expense.

The Punchayet also hears complaints and gives decisions in matters civil as well as criminal, itself or through arbitrators appointed from year to year. It has the power to tax industries and commerce of our village. It can deprive individuals of their holdings if they happen to break its regulations and go against the spirit of its ideals.

The various rules and regulations governing the life of the individual in our village may be divided under four heads: economic, social, political and religious. We shall describe the most important among these with a view to give an idea of the relations

between the community, represented by the Punchayet, and the individual.

Economic: These relate to the leasing of farms and houses, taxation, regulation of trade, etc. The landholder is required to pay an annual rental which is equal to the assessment paid by him to the government. The amount of the rental is utilized for the liquidation of debt contracted for the building up of this property and for financing our various institutions. This rental includes the rent of the house, sanitation tax, road and wheeltax. Thus the person who joins our community becomes in a real sense a partner in the whole concern and is assured of his due share of conveniences.

This does not mean that he becomes a permanent owner of the property. The property is owned by the community, represented by the Punchayet, and the Punchayet reserves the right to redivide the lands and make new allotments after every twenty years as the community may grow.

This is because some families may grow so large that the small pieces of land allotted to them may not yield enough to support them. These will, therefore, divide themselves into two or more families and in the new allotment they will all receive equal shares.

Needless to say that the property cannot be mortgaged by the holder nor can he sublet it to any outsider. For temporary subletting to a fellow-villager also the sanction of the Punchayet is required.

Failure to cultivate a piece of land for three successive years, unless due to common causes such as epidemics, shortage of water, etc., makes the allotment liable to cancellation. In case of such cancellation, on receipt of the Punchayet's notice, the tenant must relinquish the land and other immovable property within a month after the harvest season and upon this property, no matter if partly built out of individual earnings, he has no right whatsoever. Such circumstances, however,

are not expected to arise as the Punchayet never leaves any lands to remain uncultivated. By direct and indirect persuasion it sees that the landholder remains an efficient partner in its organization.

It is open to the members to purchase shares in any industrial or commercial concern of the Punchayet the income from which is free from all taxes. If, however, any member wishes to start an industrial or commercial concern of his own, his income from such concern is liable to a tax of two annas per Rupee.

Social: In the matter of social legislation, that is to say legislation relating to social customs and rules, the Punchayet acts on the principle of least interference. Everyone may observe what customs he likes provided they do not interfere with the life of other members of the community. The social legislation of our Punchayet, therefore, is of a negative kind. It forbids certain things but it does not make it necessary for any one to accept

any new customs. For instance, the beating of drums and other noisy performances on the occasions of birth, death and marriage are forbidden. They require special permission of the Punchayet. Worship at the wells and the water-tanks with offerings of flour, *ghee*, etc., is forbidden in the interests of the health of the village. The Punchayet also forbids *Deti-leti* or the custom of purchasing husbands and wives. These and similar other prohibitions characterize the social legislation of our Punchayet.

Political: Our Punchayet is not a political body. But no active, enterprising association, even in a village, can remain absolutely indifferent to the politics of the country. We have said before that our Punchayet selects candidates for election to higher administrative and legislative bodies. It also organizes campaigns, in its own limited sphere, for the support of various Bills before our Legislative Council and keeps in touch with the movements aiming

at reform of the country's government. Village Punchayets in India are sadly out of touch with the politics of the country. But our Punchayet aims at becoming part and parcel of the Nation as every ideal Punchayet ought to be. To this end it requires our co-operation and support. Its politics for all purposes are the politics of the community. Of course, it allows a reasonable amount of freedom to the individual to think and act in the way he likes. But where the success of its avowed ideals and the interests of the community as a whole are at stake it expects the individual to conform to its wishes.

Religion: In the matter of religious legislation, as in that of the social, our Punchayet follows the principle of least interference. It lays down certain rules to prevent the abuse of religion and its becoming a cause of friction. For instance, it insists that no member shall join any sectarian institution or assist in its propaganda. It forbids proselytism in all

forms in order to prevent creation of sects. It forbids raising mosques, temples for idol-worship, churches and similar places for sectarian service. Instead of these it provides a common place of worship for all its members of which we shall know more in the succeeding chapter.

RELIGION OF THE MODEL-VILLAGER

THOUGH religion, essentially, is a personal matter, still the average man and woman do not feel its intensity and force unless they worship in congregation, it being given only to mystics to feel its intensity at all times, whether alone or in congregation—nay; rather alone than in congregation. Unless, therefore, we wish to deprive the average man and woman of the full enjoyment of this strange and beautiful passion which has an ennobling effect upon the mind, we cannot ignore the collective aspect of religion. Our Punchayet, therefore, maintains a place where the Model-villagers can meet and worship together. As this place is a common meeting-house for people of all communities, we do not call it a church, a mosque or a synagogue.

These names carry a sectarian smell. We call it just an *Ibadat Khana* or the House of Worship.

Of all our institutions the Ibadat Khana can least be left to itself. Men never abuse any place so freely as a house of worship. You see them doing all sorts of things round about, just because it belongs to nobody. They write names on the walls, they bring in a lot of dirt and create so much noise. If only to prevent that we must leave some one in charge of our Ibadat Khana. But there are other more weighty reasons which make our Punchayet appoint a Keeper to look after it. Men not only abuse their sacred places, they abuse themselves when left without guidance. They engage themselves in vain gossip and quarrels. There is, therefore, usually, an educated man of religious bent of mind in charge of our Ibadat Khana.

It is an important, controversial question whether the men in charge of religious

institutions should be paid or honorary workers. While honorary workers have this advantage on their side that they possess an enthusiasm which paid men cannot be expected to show in their work, they have also a disadvantage attaching to them. They are men who care for none and they have always some fads of their own which they would never give up. These fads may or may not agree with the principles of our organization. Besides, even honorary, religious workers happen to suffer from the common human disease, hunger. There has never yet been a man who worked without eating. Honorary, religious workers who receive no pay receive charity and gifts. This is only a different and unscientific way of distribution of dues. Our Punchayet, therefore, prefers a paid man of a religious turn of mind to an honorary worker.

Our Ibadat Khana is open to all villagers as well as to outsiders for worship at all times. While everybody is free to offer

worship in whatever way he likes or not offer at all, the Keeper of our Ibadat Khana encourages Nature-worship morning and evening, in congregation. Indeed, what other worship can be more ennobling in its effect upon the mind than the worship of Nature's beauty and grandeur? At sunrise the Keeper conducts Sun-worship which consists of silent meditation on the beauty of the rising sun or of chanting non-sectarian *mantras*, such as the following:

"From untruth lead me to Truth,
From darkness lead me to Light,
From death to Immortality!"

The Keeper conducts the evening service in a similar way for those who may like to join. The night of the Full Moon is fixed for a special Grand Service with the chanting of non-sectarian hymns and songs which make the villagers feel a spiritual link between themselves, strengthening their sense of solidarity. A book of such hymns and *mantras* has been compiled which a

special religious committee has examined and sanctioned for use in our Ibadat Khana.

Our Ibadat Khana besides the morning and evening worship organizes instructive lectures on various subjects, social, philosophical and religious, for the benefit of the villagers. Prominent outsiders are invited to speak. Sunday, which our village observes as the day of rest, is filled with such programmes. These lectures, of course, are open to outside public, for we, like all human beings, like to see more people become like ourselves.

Our Ibadat Khana also maintains a well-equipped library and a reading-room which are open during special hours of the day and the night according to the convenience of the villagers and whole time during holidays. Ours is a temple of no idle worshippers worshipping idle gods. The Ibadat Khana is a centre of adult education. With its lectures, its library and reading-room joined to its religious activi-

ties, it has developed into a centre of education as important as the School or the Club.

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF OUR LIFE

"MAN liveth not by bread alone!" Truer words were never uttered about this strange animal who needs so many other things besides bread to keep him alive. Bread can sustain only the body. The Ibadat Khana with its religious exercises can strengthen the spirit, but its serious pursuits interest only a small percentage of men. The average man and woman need diversions of different types. They want some "fun" in life, as they say. And so we have a Club in our village.

The Club is a necessity in every village and town, if only to save men from absolutely useless gossip in the streets and other objectionable forms of amusement. Where there are no clubs people usually meet in public squares and streets for relaxation or recreation. Our organizers, though

serious-minded people, themselves rarely entering the Club and still more rarely seeking amusements of any type, recognize the need of such an institution. They provide a decent meeting-ground where the villagers can meet and talk according to civilized conventions; where they are in good company and safe from the quarrels and indecencies of street gatherings.

But our Club Secretary is not content with providing only a meeting-ground for our villagers. He aims at making the Club a centre of education like the Ibadat Khana. There is such a thing as deceiving unto wisdom and our Secretary follows this principle to the fullest advantage of the villagers. Through entertainments and amusements, through games and lectures he always seeks to advance their culture. Let us describe a few of the activities of our Club.

It has, to begin with, an amateur, dramatic society which stages performances once a month in the Club theatre. The perform-

ances cover all kinds of subjects, political, religious, social, economic, literary and scientific. These have a veneer of sex-appeal. Here, in passing, we may remark that our educators in the Model Village recognize the legitimacy of sex-appeal and believe in the necessity of sex-education. The Secretary also, from time to time, arranges lectures on various social subjects. Then there are women's competitions in sewing, embroidery, painting and other arts, and boys' competitions in swimming, cycling, boating, etc. Occasionally swimming and cycling competitions take place between boys on one side and girls on the other and they create a lot of fun and healthy amusement.

The Club also organizes weekly excursions to various natural spots round about the village. And every six months, under the guidance of a professor, parties go out to old historical places and towns of political, religious, industrial or commercial importance, or to hill-stations. These excur-

sions break the monotony of life and increase interest in our work when we come back.

Needless to say that our Club provides, besides various indoor games, large playgrounds for its members. Some of the Club's activities such as dramatic performances, excursions, lectures and competitions are usually shared in by outsiders. Even a small percentage of membership is open to them. This is done in order to create sympathy for our institutions.

Music, dances, folk-songs etc., enliven our moon-lit nights. For two or three nights in every month, after dinner, we amuse ourselves in this way. Then we have our Festivals of Seasons when all the village folk come together to eat a common meal in the Club and dance. On these occasions the Ibadat Khana and other institutions join hands with the Club and there are common performances in which the students, the Club members, the Punchayet members and those who frequent the Ibadat

Khana join. These occasions help to bridge the gulf between these institutions. We have two such occasions in the year, one in the spring and the other in the autumn.

Our Club also keeps such articles as every individual cannot provide for himself, for the use of its members, for instance, those needed on the occasions of marriage, death and other social ceremonies. In other places it is the Punchayet that keeps these articles for the use of its members. But as our Punchayet in the Model Village has become a busy administrative body, this important duty has been assigned to the Club. The Club has extended this service to the supply of other articles needed on other than social occasions by our villagers. For instance, individual members of our little community cannot keep motor cars, trucks and lorries which they sometimes need. Our Club, therefore, provides these on hire basis.

EDUCATION IN THE MODEL VILLAGE

OUR School has a commodious building. It is not a big line of rooms looking like barracks, as other school-buildings are. We purposely make it look like a private house and not like an office in order to make the children feel at home. And it is furnished in a simple style. The teacher's desk, dominating the whole class, is absent. Our boys and girls sit round their teacher in a familiar way and do not seem to be afraid of him. He is an agile person moving from place to place, now sitting with this student now with that, explaining various things concerning their studies.

Two other peculiarities of our School are its Common Room and its Indoor Games' Room. You see the boys and girls moving about freely in these rooms now playing,

now talking, now reading, now discussing various subjects. There is a General Supervisor who moves about from the Common Room to the Games' Room, from the Games' Room to the Reading Room, just to keep an eye over the students. But he does not make his presence felt.

Still another peculiarity of our School is this: The walls of the verandah, the classes, the Common Room and even passages are not bare. If a newspaper, a tramcar, or a railway station is full of advertisements why should the school walls be bare? We must make some use of them and we can advertise something much more useful than drugs, articles of wear, etc., which the newspapers and tramcars advertise. We advertise the most precious article that man can acquire—knowledge; we advertise good character, we advertise patriotism, we advertise our national and international heroes. Therefore, you do not see empty walls in our School. They are decorated with pictures and mottos of all

sorts,—pictures of sea animals, pictures of rare birds, pictures showing the anatomy of human and animal organisms, pictures of famous places, of historical monuments, of great kings and soldiers, of patriots, of saints and spiritual geniuses of mankind. The General Supervisor knows all about them. You see boys and girls gathering round him and bombarding him with questions about this king or that animal they see on the wall.

This is the general idea we get of our School at first sight. Let us now describe its management, its principles and its methods.

Who runs the School? The question of finance is of the first importance, as he who spends must also control. Now our villagers, men of limited means, specially during the first few years of their life in this village, cannot support and run out of their own resources, unaided, an institution like the one described by us. Indeed, such a school would be too expensive for our

fifty or sixty families which at the most may have only hundred boys and girls of school-going age. Our School, therefore, depends for its funds also upon the neighbouring villages whose boys and girls we admit. We get a grant from the Government too. For our village is not and cannot be an isolated republic. It is and it will remain a part and parcel of our great Nation; nay, of the Humanity at large. It must 'give and take'. It must have its place in the economy of our national life. It must contribute its share to the building up of our Nation and enrich itself by deriving its life-blood and sustenance from it. Indeed, the Model-villagers are not a segregated community; they come here to form an ideal community linked with the outside world in a more real and useful way than any village community in India is today. Our Ibadat Khana, our School and other institutions are our links with the outside world. But though we receive help from outside, the major portion of funds to

run our School is supplied by the Punchayet of our village. For in view of the experimental stage of our existence, in a village which depends for its growth upon the fulfilment of its ideals, we cannot afford to lose control of an important institution like the School.

For practical reasons, we have affiliated our School to the University. Now the question arises, if the School is affiliated, of what good to us will its control be?

Education has three distinct sides: (1) ATMOSPHERE (2) METHOD and (3) CONTENT. Of these the first two are solely in our power to create. The third only is under the control of the University. The first two factors, we regard to be of greater importance than the third,—Content. Let us describe briefly what we have done with regard to each one of these.

ATMOSPHERE

As our object is to bring up a strongly united and sound-minded community of

men and women, which may form the nucleus of a larger organization, we have done away with several inhibitions which characterize the system of education in our country and have tried to create an atmosphere of freedom in the School so that the young minds may grow as it were in a garden. Did we not see our boys and girls mixing freely with their teachers, walking along the passages, crowding the Common Room and making so much healthy noise during recess which would send a teacher of the present-day school in India to a lunatic asylum? But our teachers in the Model School do not mind this 'disorder'. They allow the same amount of liberty to their pupils as they would get in a reasonably managed home by a reasonable, not too irritable, mother. Of course there are times of quiet and hard work, when the classes become silent as if all students had gone to sleep. But to achieve that, to make students put their minds in the work, it is necessary to let them have an occasional release.

The relations between the teachers and the students are those of the elders with the younger folk and not those that prevail between a master and a servant or an official and his subordinates. Officialism is completely absent from our institutions. Have we not got enough of it outside our village? Our educators also do not believe in compulsory attendance. In spite of that our classes are always full. As you go along the verandah you see the inquisitive students crowding round the General Supervisor and asking all sorts of questions. An outsider would wonder how their interest has been awakened. The General Supervisor would probably tell him, they like their work because they are not forced to do it.

As regards the building, which is an important factor in Atmosphere, we saw, it was constructed and furnished in a simple, homely style. For it is meant to be not an office, but a Home where the students' minds may grow freely. Our School has also a large number of trees

in its compound and a park. The students make good use of them. Sometimes the teachers hold classes under trees, sometimes the students hold their debates and theatrical performances under them. The teachers do not object when a class decides to come out and work under the trees or when they decide to sit inside again. They seem to follow their students in many matters rather than be followed by them, and this brings us to the second factor,—

THE METHOD

Indeed, true guidance is not possible except through love and understanding. Our teachers in the first place try to understand their students; they do not insist on making themselves understood. They just like to walk by the side of their pupils, study their movements and see that they are safely conducted towards their natural goal. The parents or the teachers cannot do more than that. Who teaches the babe to eat? Who teaches it to walk and speak?

Nature! Nature on the very first day of its birth teaches the babe that movement of the lips which draws milk out of the mother's breast and which even wise elders cannot imitate. Similarly, when the time for walking comes, Nature creates a restless desire in the child to move about. Give whatever toys you like, the child is satisfied only if it is allowed to toddle and walk. And through what a ceaseless prattle does it learn to talk! You cannot force it to speak even two words. But when the time to speak comes, the child prattles the whole day long.

Now, our educators believe, the same is the case with grown-up boys. Our desire to acquire knowledge is inborn and insatiable. Science and philosophy bear witness to it. It is there in every boy and girl. You have only to understand it and guide it. At times, when the desire is not keen you may sharpen it by offering little temptations, but you cannot create it if it does not already exist. You cannot

force knowledge down the student's throat when he has no appetite for it. Why then force at all? What you have to do is to wait and watch and understand. And this is a cardinal principle in our education—*not to force.*

Our educators also discourage memorizing. Too much retention retards renovation. Artificial memorizing burdens the mind. This idea also is drawn from Nature. Those acts or facts of life which are of real interest to us leave indelible impressions upon the mind without any effort to remember them. When, however, they do not concern us much, they just pass by, leaving only faint impressions. For retaining those ideas, therefore, in which the student's mind naturally takes interest or for which it has temperamental liking, memorizing is not necessary. Contact only is required. Indeed, has not all the labour of our old teachers and ourselves to make us remember historical dates and particulars of local Geography been wasted? Some

students have no liking for Geometry. Through hard labour the teacher succeeds in getting it fixed into the student's brain, but we may be sure that it is going to be forgotten when he passes his examination. Our educators see this and have entirely done away with memorizing. They rely more upon contact with the subject through travels, visits to factories and farms or other places where direct knowledge may be obtained. Lessons in Agriculture, for instance, they give in the fields; Arithmetic they teach in the local cloth factory where they obtain various figures of income and expenditure; Botany they teach in the village garden, and so on. Even when contact cannot be obtained, they think, memorizing is not the way. They then rely upon illustration.

But if we do away with memorizing, we must do away with examinations also. Only in the Preparatory Class, where the students are prepared for University examination or for joining other schools

and colleges, have they any examinations. Otherwise our teachers are satisfied with general tests. Besides the fact that examinations rarely give us real knowledge of the student's progress, there is a more serious objection against them. It is that they severely tell upon the student's health. Those who have been students under the present system of education in our country know this only too well. Our teachers in the Model School however say, knowledge being a natural pursuit of man, we do not see why our students should ruin their health in acquiring it. When mechanical, artificial tests like examinations are fixed, they are forced to worry and work hard at memorizing with the result that when they leave their school they are physically ruined and mentally fatigued. In the Model School, therefore, we have definitely given up examinations. The teachers can judge the students' progress by other ways. Being in contact with them throughout the year, they can always say how far the students

have progressed in particular subjects. To make sure again they verify their impressions by general tests which do not require any memorizing.

CONTENT

Lastly, though the School has to conform to University standards, University regulations place no bar against introducing additional subjects. It seems to our educators that the various subjects taught in the schools in our country are taken haphazard. They take into consideration neither man's nature nor his acquired habits.

Man's life may be divided into four parts: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. No system of education can be considered perfect or sound unless from the very start it takes into consideration these four factors and tries at once to control and develop them. The subjects taught in the University-controlled schools do not answer to this need. Therefore, our teachers have introduced some new features to supplement

University education. If they could, they would, indeed, do away with certain subjects which they find unnecessary or unsuited to local needs. But as long as we depend for our funds upon outside public and the Government, our educators can improve the content of education only by introducing additional features. Some of the subjects emphasized specially are: Practical Hygiene, Music, Painting, Sculpture and Moral Science which do not receive sufficient attention in other schools. Then there are other subjects related to the local needs of the population, such as, lessons in Agriculture, Poultry-farming, Domestic Science, etc., to make the content of education in our School richer and fuller. Of course, care has to be taken not to tax the student's mind too much. But the change in the method and the atmosphere helps our students and makes the introduction of additional subjects possible, by saving time and energy that are otherwise wasted over memorizing.

Attached to our School is a little Museum where we collect various curios obtained by the teachers and the students during their travels and excursions or presented by the public and the Punchayet. Old, rare manuscripts, eggs of birds, skeletons of animals, old and modern paintings, samples of local industrial products and similar other objects within our reach are kept in the museum to accentuate the student's interest in his studies. The classes make use of the Museum by turns on fixed days in the week. Before and after the school the Museum is open to the public. The students and the public take keen interest in the Museum as they are reminded of their travels when they see the objects brought by them. Of course our Museum is not and cannot be as up-to-date as the Museums we see in the cities. Ours is a small beginning. Nevertheless, it is an important and useful part of our educational system as it helps to make the content of our education richer and fuller.

One important thing our teachers never forget. No system of education in the world was ever free from propaganda. We do not justify propaganda through education but our School in the present stage of our society cannot be an exception. Education under modern European Governments, under Christian rule in the Middle Ages or under the ancient Greek States, has always had some well-defined political, religious or social object in view. There is no government which does not try to inculcate some doctrine upon its youth. We cannot justify this practice under ideal social conditions. But in this world of combative parties our little village-community cannot remain neutral altogether. It must stand for its ideals and spread them as far as possible. Therefore, our teachers impress our students, unconsciously, with the beauty of the ideals that bind together our little community so that they shall carry an indelible mark upon their souls and during their career

outside the School, in the various walks of life, they may remain willing servants and missionaries of the Ideal which inspires their educators.

Through casual talk, through text-books, through the very atmosphere of the School, their teachers impress upon them the fact that mankind is really one; there are no chemical or bacteriological differences in our blood; "yellow blood" does not bring "yellow fever" nor "white blood" leprosy; that there are no pure races left on earth and that it is no longer possible to raise any barriers between man and man. The beauty of cultural cohesion through inter-marriages and the ridiculousness of sectarianism are brought home to our students through stories and examples. Other ideals that our teachers seek to impress upon them are, 'co-operativism' and collectivism in industry as opposed to individualism. The former are shown to them to contain the seeds of man's economic salvation and material progress. They specially empha-

size, having regard to the prevailing evils in our society, the natural equality of men and women. Through co-education they encourage mutual understanding of sexes. Of course the fact that men and women have to perform different duties in life is taken into consideration in our School and provision is made for separate classes with special subjects which boys and girls attend after the common class-work is over.

THE CHILD AND THE WOMAN

I

THE women of our village are not idle, gossiping folk. If our community in the Model Village has achieved all that we have described before, it is because our women strive to be worthy partners of men in every respect. While household work has been by Nature allotted to woman as her special duty, there is no reason why she should be imprisoned in the house day and night. The woman in our times has shown that in certain spheres of work outside the house she is the equal of man, if not superior to him. Social service, education, literature and certain lines of industry are natural to her even as household work. The village woman also helps on the farm. If in the military and some other departments, where extra physical strength

is required, she does not shine so brightly as man, in other spheres she leaves him far behind. The biological difference, therefore, does not prove her inferiority. To aid her we have introduced certain devices and ways by which she can save time to actively co-operate with man in the outside work.

Her chief duties as regards the management of the house are, cleaning, looking after children, cooking and washing. To help her we have introduced new, time-saving brooms and brushes for cleaning and issued some literature suggesting better methods of washing, furnishing, etc. We have also taken a bold step, following the example of some other countries and even improving upon them, in the matter of care and management of children.

In our country, in a rich family, the children are in the charge of servants. Poor women, who have to work for a living, practise one or the other device resorted to by working women in industrial centres:

giving opium to the little ones to put them to sleep, locking them up, or binding them with a piece of cloth so that they cannot move about. These practices are inhuman and thoroughly unfit to be practised by our model women. And as our villagers cannot afford to engage servants for household work—nor do we encourage them to do so—we had to make some other arrangement for their children. A Nursery was started. Children's care at home takes up the major portion of the woman's time which could easily be saved if the children of the community were taken care of by a few women in a nursery during the working hours of the day. Not only can her time be thus saved but the children's time can be better employed, as they will be more scientifically looked after and educated.

Education given in the Nursery varies according to age. Development of senses, distinguishing objects, distinguishing colours, counting, etc., are taught through various

exercises. But our matrons take care not to educate too much and burden fresh sprouting minds. They aim only at helping nature and not changing it. For older children we have nursery tales and stories which are specially selected for them, mechanoes and building sets, simple drawing, music and some games. Thus not only our children are kept amused and happy but much harm is avoided which ignorant mothers with their old ideas and prejudices unconsciously do to their children. The older children are required to dress and clean themselves under the supervision of a nurse. Some of them at times help in looking after the younger ones. Their methods of eating, drinking, sleeping and talking are carefully watched and to some extent regulated just as they should be in an ideal home. In this way they receive a training which is bound to make them happy and useful citizens in later life.

Let us describe a day of our children's life in the Nursery: Children are received

at ten o'clock in the morning, in winter, and at seven o'clock in summer. They are received by two nurses who give them a wash and dress them up. They are served with food in an hour's time after being admitted. The food is supplied according to the children's age and the Head Matron's prescription. They are then handed over to the teachers, two taking charge of infants under 2 years of age and one of children between 2 and 4 years. They go to two different classes which are decorated with pictures and where suitable toys and other instruments of education are kept. Children under two years do nothing but play; only occasionally does the teacher make an attempt to teach them. Their education mainly consists of walking exercises, naming and distinguishing objects, etc. The older boys and girls are taught counting, distinguishing colours, recitation, etc. After two hours they are taken out to the Nursery garden where they play simple games with or without

toys. They then have their mid-day meal, the older children later and the younger earlier. After food they are put to sleep. In the afternoon again some simple exercises and lessons are given till the mothers return from work and take them home again.

While the Nursery takes charge of children upto 4 years, children between four and six are received in the Kindergarten. The Kindergarten is a link between the home and the school.

Our School and the Kindergarten are not fashioned after any one pattern. The only principle that guides us in the choice of our methods is common sense. There is no doubt that we keep ourselves informed of all the latest methods. But we accept only such of them as we find useful in the peculiar circumstances of our life. No country, no race, no culture, receives any preference. We have based the whole organization on the principle that man has four sides to his collective life,—the

economic, the political, the social and the religious; he has also four sides to his individual life,—the physical, the emotional, the mental and the spiritual. Our education in the Nursery, the Kindergarten and the School takes into consideration all these factors.

In the Nursery the chief occupation of the children is play. The lessons, whatever they are, are attempted through play. In the Kindergarten, however, our teachers take a bolder step and relate education to the various factors described above. For a sound system of education must begin soundly. Still games and amusements occupy a good portion of the children's time in the Kindergarten. But they are organized games. In the Kindergarten, as in the Nursery, the Atmosphere is regarded as the chief factor. Next in importance comes Method. We do not worry much about the Content at this stage. For children are more susceptible to impressions than to ideas. And as the Nursery and the

Kindergarten supplement the home, our educators see to it that the atmosphere is, as far as possible, homely. The teachers and matrons in charge of the Nursery and the Kindergarten represent the parents. Therefore they are always loving and motherly towards children. They use no rod to enforce discipline. They depend upon the atmosphere they create and seek their goal through its unconscious medium.

The Nursery is run by two qualified teachers who have received training in some educational institution and a nurse who has been trained in some hospital. There are two trained teachers in the Kindergarten Section. Then there is the Head Matron in charge of both the institutions. These are, as far as possible, enrolled from our own community. The Nursery and the Kindergarten are under the supervision of our Doctor and the Head-master of our School. As the upkeep of these institutions costs a good deal to our Punchayet, fees are charged to the students.

They are uniform in all classes, single fee being payable by one student; two children from one family pay one and a half fee; three children or more from one family pay only two fees. This is done to bring education within reach of every one and not to tax large families. Both these institutions are open to the outside public but an admission fee is charged to outsiders in order to meet the expenses.

II

The new cleaning devices in our homes save the women, as we said, a good deal of time and so do the Nursery and the Kindergarten. What have we done with regard to the other two important items of household work,—cooking and washing clothes?

In an earlier chapter we have described our houses as containing a number of rooms, a kitchen and so on. But in the kitchen we prepare only special food that we may need on occasions of import-

ance to our families, such as marriages, dinners, family holidays, etc. Such occasions become more enjoyable when we serve our guests with special home-made food instead of taking them to the Co-operative Kitchen where we usually take our meals. Besides these special occasions we also need our private kitchens for cooking special food at the time of illness or for an occasional afternoon tea. Our chief meals of the day, which take the bulk of women's time, we get from our Co-operative Kitchen. Sixty families, cooking three meals a day, would spend 180 hours a day in cooking. And consider the botheration it would mean to everybody! In the Co-operative Kitchen we require only four permanent men to do the work for sixty families and thus more than 150 hours of work are saved daily. Four men working 7 hours each spend only 28 hours of work. And, then, by this way our food is more neatly and scientifically prepared by professional cooks. Meals are

served regularly at fixed times, before the workers go to their work, then at noon when they return from work, and in the evening. This, incidentally, regularizes our villagers' diet, which in the family is not possible to do unless the housewife has a number of servants. This practice has improved the health of our village considerably.

In the dining hall, attached to our Kitchen, there are two divisions. In one sit peasants and workers, in the other teachers, artists and other men who work in offices. They like this arrangement as thus they have congenial company. The peasant likes to sit with his fellow-peasants and the artist with his fellow-artists. There is no difference either in the food supplied or in other arrangements. Nor is there any restriction placed on the boarders as regards the seating. We believe human stomachs are made all after one pattern. It is not that some need delicacies and some are satisfied with hard food. They should all

receive good, nutritious food, neither too hard to digest nor too soft and delicate. A healthy stomach should have no idiosyncrasies.

In a similar way we run our Co-operative Laundry for washing linen. It saves several hundreds of working hours every month. Leaving aside other co-operative institutions, let us see how much time and wealth we save by our Co-operative Kitchen and the Co-operative Laundry. In the Kitchen, for our village of sixty families (fifty landholders and ten families of residents from outside, of which we shall know later) we save, as we said, 150 hours daily, *i.e.*, 4500 hours monthly. Washing linen takes at least half as much time as cooking when it is done individually, *i.e.*, 90 hours daily for sixty families of about five members each. All the linen of the village washed together by scientific methods does not engage more than four men permanently, working 7 hours a day. Besides this we have a fifth man who

does the collecting and keeps account of linen received and delivered. These five men spend in all 35 hours of work daily and thus we save 55 hours. In one month our saving at this rate would be 1650 hours. With the help of these two institutions, at the end of the year, 73800 working hours are saved. Let us calculate the price of this at a very low rate of one anna per hour. It comes to more than four thousand, six hundred rupees—an amount sufficient to run our School without any help from outside!

As all families are not of the same size and as they do not take the same amount of food nor use the same number of clothes daily, we have to fix charges according to the number of meals supplied and the number of clothes washed. The charges are settled weekly. Unless notice is given 12 hours in advance for discontinuance of meals for any length of time, our charges are debited to all registered boarders. The charges are low both for meals and for

washing. Therefore no one considers it worth while to cook or wash separately. Besides, no one has time to do it.

THE CARE OF THE SICK

THE care of the sick is one of the most important duties of a government. Sanitation, education, safe-guarding the health of the individual, etc., are the return made by the society for the taxes and for the subordination of the individual's will it demands. But in India though the villager is highly taxed and completely subordinated to the State, there are practically no amenities offered to him. The Dispensary and the Maternity Home are not a common feature of Indian villages. Our villages receive the policeman's visit oftener than the doctor's with the result that unqualified practitioners have sprung up everywhere to the detriment of the health of the society. The Model Village, consisting as it does of a community of farmers, cannot afford a full-

fledged hospital. But the Punchayet maintains a small Dispensary in charge of a qualified doctor with one assistant, and a Maternity Home in charge of a qualified nurse. In an ideal society these institutions would be supported by the Government of the country. But till those ideal conditions are reached we must do what we can for ourselves. The Punchayet, therefore, supports these institutions partly out of charges made to the patients and partly out of its revenues. The Dispensary and the Maternity Home are also open to the outside public. The first right of admittance, however, is given to our villagers.

Believing that prevention is better than cure, our Punchayet uses the doctor's time more in propaganda against disease than its cure. The doctor carries on a regular crusade from house to house. He has to visit all the sixty huts in the village and the public buildings once a week. Cleanliness we regard as a social obligation and not merely a personal virtue. Our villagers

are restricted from infecting others with diseases as much as from hurling blows at one another. If, therefore, the doctor finds any house in an insanitary condition, he at once reports the matter to the Sanitary Committee which sends a notice without delay to the person guilty of such an offence, requiring him to remove the danger to public health at once. Before the doctor inspects the house next morning the danger to public health must be removed, otherwise it is done by the Punchayet at the cost of the guilty person and a fine is imposed. In a similar way is enforced the segrevation of persons suffering from contagious and highly infectious diseases.

The doctor also inspects the water-supply, the drainage channels, etc. Here and there he throws suggestions regarding the arrangement of furniture in the house, necessity of ventilation, proper care of the cow-shed, cleaning of private drainage channels, etc. Thus every day he keeps the villagers on guard against disease. In other matters

our Dispensary and the Maternity Home are like other dispensaries and Homes in other places. There is, however, one thing to be said about them and that is, when any patient comes from our own community he is never refused treatment on account of his inability to pay. In fact we talk about payment of fees after the patient is cured. When a person's life is threatened, we cannot exact our pound of flesh before doing anything to save him. Our doctor does his duty. It is then for the Punchayet to collect dues by whatever methods it may like.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES

WE have hitherto dwelt on social and religious activities of our Punchayet. These no doubt reveal the meaning and purpose of its existence, but they presuppose a sound economic foundation. In this chapter we shall, therefore, describe its economic activities.

Our Board of Commerce and Industries, consisting of three members of the Punchayet and two nominated by the village tradesmen, is in charge of the economic side of our organization. Their guiding principle, as evidenced in their activities, is COLLECTIVISM, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE. We have said before that, taking into consideration man's inherent selfishness, our Punchayet has not altogether banished individualism. *It dis-*

courages individualism by encouraging collectivism. The Board recognizes that the growth of an industry requires great care and economy, specially in the beginning, which characterize individual effort. Besides, we must recognize that man's greed is natural and can be utilized to achieve great things. Therefore, we must make it at least theoretically possible for an individual to amass wealth from his earnings. Russia, in the first wave of emotion, committed the mistake of destroying individual-owned industries, but it had soon to retrace its steps. In small industries specially, what the owner can do the paid manager can never do. Big industries, which require a large organization, stand on a differing footing. Besides, we cannot change man's nature in a year or a decade's time. We must make allowance for human drawbacks. Still we must keep our eyes constantly fixed upon the ideal and try to advance a step whenever we can. Our Board,

therefore, has made a beginning in co-operative industry by starting a rice factory, a dairy and a cloth factory with local and outside capital contributed in equal shares. It leaves the minor industries to individual enterprise.

The surplus of our industrial and agricultural output is marketed through the Board. While the Board does not actually receive and forward goods, on receiving intimation of marketable surplus from individual producers, it advertises them and receives offers. This facilitates trade, firstly, because the Board commands confidence which small, individual producers cannot command; secondly, because it saves time and money to individual producers who would have to maintain otherwise a sales department. The Board does the advertising and marketing at lesser cost and in a more efficient way. When, for instance, our cloth factory has surplus articles, not needed in the village all it has to do is to send samples along with the

rates to the Board. The Board advertises these and sends them to its agents in various outside places where there may be a demand for such articles. When the offers come, the Board communicates them to the factory-manager who despatches goods directly from the factory. The Board charges a commission on sales. In a similar way the farmer sends the samples of his surplus grain, the Board forwards them to the agents and the farmer receives the offers through the Board. The poor farmer, in other villages, owing to his lack of knowledge in matters of trade and owing to the greed of the *dalal* (the village broker) is not always able to obtain the same rates as bigger producers can. But in the hands of the Board the small farmer's interests are equally safe.

An important institution in our village, run by the Board, is the Co-operative Stores. In order to make it a success the Board has temporarily monopolized the retail trade. We do not quarter any other shop in the

village, though we do not prevent the villagers from going out for their purchases. Force in trade creates suspicion. But the members of our community understand the value of patronizing their own shop even if sometimes it cannot face unscrupulous competition.

The shop was started with an authorized capital of 2500 rupees. Our villagers were made to purchase fifty rupees worth of shares per holding. This was made a condition of their joining the community. Half of the subscribed capital was paid up in a year's time by the farmers out of their income from the holdings and thus we obtained a sum of Rs. 1250 to start with.

It would, indeed, have been hard for our members to part with so much money during the first year when they need it for investment in their lands. But the Stores allowed credit upto 75% of their paid-up capital at a very low rate of interest, not for one year only, but permanently. But this way they obtained a double advan-

tage from their money—it began to earn for them while it was ready to serve them when needed. Nor did the Stores lose anything for allowing this facility. For the villagers were encouraged to buy more from their own Stores since they had no money to buy outside.

Our villagers cannot possibly do everything for themselves. We require quite a number of men from outside, though we may send out an equal number. Indeed, we cannot stop this give-and-take between village and village. For instance, we need some artisans,—a cobbler, a carpenter, a mason, a blacksmith and, perhaps, when our community grows rich, we may need a goldsmith too. But we do not find all these among our fifty families. We have to bring some men from outside; they comprise the ten additional families that we have quartered in the village. Our Board of Commerce and Industries employs these men to conduct a small Technical School where our boys are trained. The village folk

come for their various needs to the Technical School. The artisans teach while they work. The fees for work done are passed on to the Board. And thus our Technical School becomes a self-supporting institution. The boys who have a special liking for any particular line are sent out for an advanced course of training.

Besides all this our Board offers facilities of various kinds. We have as yet no Bank of our own. But those who stand in need of a loan are recommended by the Board to our Taluka Co-operative Credit Society. The Board also takes interest in agriculture. It invites specialists from outside to give instruction in new methods of raising crops. It keeps tractors and other agricultural machinery to be lent to our farmers on daily hire-basis.

CONCLUSION

WITH the passage of time things lose their original shape, ideas their essence and institutions the sight of their meaning and purpose. Institutions that are started with the best of motives get perverted and become so many obstacles in the way of Life. It is easy to misinterpret rules and use them towards ends just the opposite of what their makers had in view. The example of our religious institutions is before us. Our institution of Model Village cannot be an exception. How long will it serve as a model?

With increase in our knowledge and change in our circumstances of life, a change in our rules and customs become inevitable. Man is a restless animal. Of all his needs the need to change is the most urgent and most deeply rooted. The author

of this plan, therefore, neither wishes nor hopes for a longer life for it than it may merit. None of its details is absolutely indispensable to Life. There are many roads leading to Rome, and the author is fond of none.

The author believes this Utopia of Model Village is not far removed from reality; it is quite within our reach. The building is built of bricks the like of which we see everywhere. Only here they have been put together as parts of a new design.

The design may be a simple one. The Model Village may not look like fairyland. But if in it the average man and woman can live comfortably and to some purpose, it will have fulfilled its object.